

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-54. (Canceled)

55. (Currently Amended) A combination of separate molecules, comprising

(a) a first molecule ~~HCV-epitope~~ comprising at least 5 amino acids ~~from at least one first domain~~ selected from the group consisting of the amino acids 1-20, 7-26, 8-18, 13-32, 37-56, 49-68, 61-80 and 73-92, of the an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, and SEQ ID NO: 8; and

(b) a second molecule comprising ~~HCV-epitope comprising~~ at least 5 amino acids ~~from at least one second domain~~ selected from the group consisting of amino acids 1688-1707, 1694-1713, 1706-1725, 1712-1731, 1718-1737], 1724-1743 and 1730-1749 of the an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, SEQ ID NO: 12, SEQ ID NO: 13, SEQ ID NO: 14 and SEQ ID NO: 15, and

(c) a third molecule ~~HCV-epitope~~ comprising at least 5 amino acids ~~from at least one third domain~~ selected from the group consisting of amino acids 2263-2282, 2275-2294, 2287-2306, 2299-2318, and 2311-2330 of the an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO: 16, SEQ ID NO: 17, SEQ ID NO: 18, SEQ ID NO: 19, and SEQ ID NO: 20, and

wherein said molecules of (a), (b) and (c) are each separate molecules from one another, wherein said molecules of (a), (b) and (c) are each different from one another and wherein said molecules are selected from the group consisting of peptides and polypeptides.

Claims 56-58. (Cancelled)

59. (Currently Amended) A combination according to claim ~~54, 55, 57, or 58,~~ 55, wherein said molecules comprising at least 5 amino acids ~~HCV-epitopes~~ are individually produced by recombinant expression or chemical synthesis.

60. (Currently Amended) A combination according to claim ~~54, 55, 57, or 58,~~ 55, wherein one or more of said first, second, or third molecules comprises ~~the combination~~ ~~is in the form of~~ a fusion polypeptide.

Claim 61. (Cancelled)

62. (Currently Amended) A combination according to claims ~~54, 55, 57, or 58,~~ 55, wherein the combination is packaged into a kit further comprising control reagents for detecting antibodies to hepatitis C virus (HCV) in a ~~mammalian~~ human body component suspected of containing said antibodies.

Claims 63 - 67. (Cancelled)

68. (new) A combination of claim 55, wherein at least one of said molecules comprises synthetic peptides or polypeptides.

69. (new) A combination of claim 68, wherein at least two of said molecules comprises synthetic peptides or polypeptides.

70. (new) A combination of claim 69, wherein at least three of said molecules comprises synthetic peptides or polypeptides.

71. (new) A combination of molecules according to claim 55 and 68-70, wherein at least one of said first, second and third molecules is selected from the group consisting of:

a first molecule comprising HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids 1-92 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids 1-92 of SEQ ID NO: 23;

a second molecule comprising HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids 1688-1749 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids 1688-1749 of SEQ ID NO: 23; and

a third molecule comprising HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids 2263-2330 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids 2263-2330 of SEQ ID NO: 23.

72. (new) A combination of molecules according to claim 55 and 68-70, wherein at least two of said first, second and third molecules is selected from the group consisting of:

a first molecule comprising HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids 1-92 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids 1-92 of SEQ ID NO: 23;

a second molecule comprising HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids 1688-1749 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids 1688-1749 of SEQ ID NO: 23; and

a third molecule comprising HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids 2263-2330 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids 2263-2330 of SEQ ID NO: 23.

73. (new) A combination of molecules according to claim 55 and 68-70, wherein:
said first molecule comprises HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids 1-92 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids 1-92 of SEQ ID NO: 23;
said second molecule comprises HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids 1688-1749 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids 1688-1749 of SEQ ID NO: 23; and
said third molecule comprises HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids 2263-2330 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids 2263-2330 of SEQ ID NO: 23.

74. (new) A method for making a kit for detecting human antibodies that bind to HCV amino acids, comprising combining the combination of claim 71 with a support suitable for detecting whether antibodies bind to the molecules of said combination.

75. (new) A method for making a kit for detecting human antibodies that bind to HCV amino acids, comprising combining the combination of claim 72 with a support suitable for detecting whether antibodies bind to the molecules of said combination.

76. (new) A method for making a kit for detecting human antibodies that bind to HCV amino acids, comprising combining the combination of claim 73 with a support suitable for detecting whether antibodies bind to the molecules of said combination.

77. (new) A combination according to claim 55 and 68-70, wherein said first molecule comprises HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids other than amino acids 1-6 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids other than 1-6 of SEQ ID NO: 23.

78. (new) A combination according to any of claims 71, wherein said first molecule comprises HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids other than amino acids 1-6 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids other than 1-6 of SEQ ID NO: 23.

79. (new) A combination of claim 72, wherein said first molecule comprises HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids other than amino acids 1-6 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids other than 1-6 of SEQ ID NO: 23.

80. (new) A combination of claim 73, wherein said first molecule comprises HCV polyprotein amino acids only from amino acids other than amino acids 1-6 of an HCV polyprotein or only from amino acids other than 1-6 of SEQ ID NO: 23.

81. (new) A combination of claim 55 and 68-70, wherein
said at least 5 amino acids of said first molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 7-26, 13-32, and 49-68 of an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4 and SEQ ID NO:6;
said at least 5 amino acids of said second molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 1694-1713 of an HCV polyprotein and SEQ ID NO:10; and
wherein said at least 5 amino acids of said third molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 2299-2318 of an HCV polyprotein and SEQ ID NO:19.

82. (new) A combination of claim 55 and 68-70, wherein
said at least 5 amino acids of said first molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 1-20, 7-26, and 49-68 of an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2 and SEQ ID NO:6;
said at least 5 amino acids of said second molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 1694-1713 and 1712-1731 of an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO:10 and SEQ ID NO:12; and

wherein said at least 5 amino acids of said third molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 2275-2294 and 2299-2318 of an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO:17 and and SEQ ID NO:19.

83. (new) A combination of claim 55 and 68-70, wherein
said at least 5 amino acids of said first molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 7-26, 13-32, 37-56, and 49-68 of an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5 and SEQ ID NO:6;
said at least 5 amino acids of said second molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 1688-1707 and 1712-1731 of an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO:9 and SEQ ID NO:12; and
wherein said at least 5 amino acids of said third molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 2275-2294 and 2299-2318 of an HCV polyprotein, SEQ ID NO:17 and and SEQ ID NO:19.

84. (new) A combination of claim 81, wherein
said at least 5 amino acids of said first molecule are selected from the amino acids of the group consisting of amino acids 7-26 of an HCV polyprotein and SEQ ID NO:2.

85. (new) A combination of claim 55, wherein said combination coats a well of an immunoassay plate.

86. (new) A combination of claims 68-70 , wherein said combination coats a well of an immunoassay plate.

87. (new) A combination of claim 81, wherein said combination coats a well of an immunoassay plate.

88. (new) A combination of claim 82, wherein said combination coats a well of an immunoassay plate.

89. (new) A combination of claim 83, wherein said combination coats a well of an immunoassay plate.

90. (new) A combination of claim 55 and 68-70, wherein said combination is bound to an immunoassay strip.

91. (new) A combination of claim 82, wherein said combination is bound to an immunoassay strip.

92. (new) A combination of claim 82, wherein said combination is bound to an immunoassay strip.

93. (new) A combination of claim 83, wherein said combination is bound to an immunoassay strip.